

Maryland & Virginia Recognizes 2014 Quality Producers of the Year

March 24, 2015 (Reston, VA) - Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative honored four farm families for achieving the highest milk quality standards throughout the cooperative for 2014. All four farms are repeat winners from the previous year, distinguishing themselves as true leaders of milk quality.

Maryland & Virginia recognized the four 2014 Quality Producers of the Year members at the cooperative's 95th Annual Meeting in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania on March 24.

In the Federal Order 1 & 33 category for the less than 3 million pounds of production, the award went to Maple Leaf Dairy Farm, William J. Steppe from South Williamsport, Pennsylvania. This is William's second year in a row receiving this award. He and his wife, Brenda, along with the help of their children, milk 56 cows and farm about 250 acres. William strives to keep his cows as clean and as comfortable as possible in his tie-stall barn and stresses cleanliness. "Milk quality is important to my operation so that I can give a good quality product to the consumer and to keep my animals healthy," William said. "It makes everything easier if the cattle are healthy."

William J. Steppe Milk Quality Numbers

43,812 Somatic Cell Count

1,000 Standard Plate Count

3,514 Preliminary Incubation Count

Honorable mentions went to Eli M. Yoder, Belleville, Pennsylvania, Lawrence Leinbach, East Earl, Pennsylvania, Jason Siegrist, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Ephraim I. Zook, Quarryville, Pennsylvania, D. Richard Arrington III, Mt. Airy, Maryland, Daniel B. Smoker, Strasburg, Pennsylvania, and Arlan B. Garber, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

In the Federal Order 1 & 33 greater than 3 million pounds of production category, the award went to Brent W. Hesel Holsteins from Woodbury, Pennsylvania. Brent, who has received the award multiple times, milks 115 cows and farms about 220 acres with the help of his brother, nephew, and several employees. "I think cleanliness is very important whether it's in the parlor, in the stalls out in the barn, or cows udders. We try to clean as much as we can," Brent said.

Brent Hesel Milk Quality Numbers

54,170 Somatic Cell Count

1,000 Standard Plate Count

1,146 Preliminary Incubation Count

Honorable mentions in this category went to Stanley W. Tucker, Jefferson, Maryland, John H. Steel, Dover, Ohio, Jay E. Hawbaker, Greencastle, Pennsylvania, Four Pines Farm, LTD, Sugar Creek, Ohio and Michael V. Flannery, Mercersburg, Pennsylvania.

In the Federal Order 5 & 7 less than 3 million pounds of production category, Kyle Leonard from Spottswood, Virginia received the award. Kyle, his wife Keedie and children Cole and Isabelle operate Colebelle Farm where they milk 120 cows. Kyle, a five-time winner of this award, has always tried to produce the highest quality milk. "Making quality milk comes down to a management decision," Kyle said. "We all have to deal with the environment, facilities, and the labor that we have and we just strive to produce the highest quality milk given those constraints."

Colebelle Farm Milk Quality Numbers

83,959 Somatic Cell Count

1,083 Standard Plate Count

6,896 Preliminary Incubation Count

Honorable mentions in this category went to Mountain View Dairy, Deer Lodge, Tennessee, Willard D. Horst, Flemingsburg, Kentucky and Benjamin F. Byers, Martinsburg, West Virginia.

The Milk Quality Award in the Federal Order 5 & 7 greater than 3 million pounds of production category went to Riggs & Stiles, Inc. of Berryville, Virginia. The Stiles family, who has received this award seven out of the past ten years, milk 380 cows with several generations of the Stiles family involved in the operation.

“Milk quality goes back to health. And healthy cows have better milk quality,” Steven Stiles said. “We want to provide a quality product to the consumer because that is what consumers demand and that is what we have to give them.”

Riggs & Stiles, Inc. Milk Quality Numbers
85,135 Somatic Cell Count
1,417 Standard Plate Count
2,474 Preliminary Incubation Count

Honorable mentions in this category went to Scenery Hill Dairy LLC, Harrisonburg, Virginia and North Point Farm, Inc., Waynesboro, Virginia.

“Now, more than ever, our sights are set on delivering high quality milk. As a fluid-focused cooperative, we rely on our membership to do that,” said Richard Mosemann, Second Vice President of Maryland & Virginia. “As a producer myself, I am honored to recognize this year’s top four quality producers.

Maryland & Virginia acknowledges the top four members in the cooperative based on their average somatic cell counts, standard plate counts and preliminary incubation counts each year at their annual meeting.

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Owned and operated by 1,500 dairy farm families from Pennsylvania to Florida, Maryland & Virginia is a milk marketing and processing cooperative providing consumers throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern U.S. with fresh milk and dairy products. Maryland & Virginia owns and operates two fluid processing plants; Marva Maid of Newport News, Virginia and Marva Maid of Landover, Maryland; two manufacturing plants, one in Laurel, Maryland and Valley Milk in Strasburg, Virginia; and a farm supply warehouse in Frederick, Maryland.

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